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RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 0065
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2889
RUEHQD/AMEMBASSY QUITO 0062
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 9139
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 4329

UNCLAS BOGOTA 002929

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR INL/LP AND INL/RM
DEPT FOR WHA/AND

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [SENV](#) [KCRM](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: NAS MONTHLY REPORT FOR AUGUST 2009

SUMMARY

¶11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The aerial eradication team sprayed 5,868 hectares (ha) and, with 73,084 ha sprayed so far this year, is on track to reach the 100,000 ha calendar goal. Phase III of the GOC's 2009 manual eradication campaign began in early August; total manual coca eradication through August was 36,209 hectares, well short of the 70,000 manual eradication goal for the year. Landmine and hostile fire incidents killed four security personnel, including a Santa Marta-based Jungla; so far, 32 personnel have died in 2009 during manual eradication operations. ARAVI's NAS-supported fleet flew 2,256 mission hours during the month. Plan Colombia Helicopter Program (PCHP) helicopters flew 74.6 hours, supporting 16 medical evacuation flights transporting a total of 21 patients. To date in 2009, the Colombian National Police has destroyed 1,114 base and 131 cocaine HCl laboratories and six airstrips, captured 339 weapons, 316 land vehicles, 243 riverine and 10 open water craft, and 158 single-engine aircraft and 26 twin-engine aircraft. The Counter Drug (CD) Brigade secured a total of 6,072 ha for aerial eradication missions. In August, the interagency complaints committee received 1,834 new claims of alleged spray damage to legal crops, mainly from Narino. The flood of complaints appears to be an effort to impede aerial eradication operations in the southwest Colombia department. 265 people demobilized, among them 60 imprisoned former insurgents and 24 indigenous former FARC members. So far this year, 1,922 people have demobilized, for a total of 19,839 since 2002. END
SUMMARY.

AERIAL ERADICATION PROGRAM

¶12. (SBU) Aircraft based in Forward Operating Locations (FOLs) in Tumaco, San Jose del Guaviare, and Larandia sprayed a total of 5,868 hectares in August. A total of 1,480 ha were sprayed out of Tumaco; 2,270 ha out of San Jose del Guaviare; and 2,118 ha out of Larandia. The aerial eradication team has sprayed 73,084 ha so far this year and is on track to reach the 100,000 ha calendar-year goal. Eradication aircraft experienced five hostile-fire incidents and four impacts in August, bringing the total for the calendar year to 18 hostile fire incidents and 25 impacts; no one has been wounded or killed as a result of these incidents. An AT-802 spray aircraft crashed in Larandia, Caqueta on August 26; no one was injured and hostile fire was ruled out as a cause of the crash.

¶13. (SBU) Eradication aircraft sprayed 868 ha of coca in the

Macarena Consolidation Program area (PCIM) in the Meta department. During the operation, an aircraft received one hostile fire impact.

MANUAL ERADICATION PROGRAM

¶4. (SBU) Manual eradication operations were ongoing in 15 departments. Phase III of the GOC's 2009 manual eradication campaign (GME program) began in early August. Total eradication of coca for August was 6,048 ha - bringing the GME program's year-to-date total to 31,424 ha. Including eradication carried out by the Colombian security forces, total coca eradication through August was 36,209 ha, well short of the 70,000 manual eradication goal for the year. During Phase III operations to date, manual eradicators have pulled up approximately 5,000 ha of coca of the 22,000 hectare Phase III goal, with approximately 160 GMEs (manual eradicator laborers) in the field working. The lack of security units to protect manual eradicators limited attempts to significantly increase the number of GMEs in the field. Anti-riot police successfully dispersed protesters who were preventing police-led GME groups in southern Bolivar department from entering the eradication zone.

¶5. (SBU) In August, landmine and hostile fire incidents killed four security personnel - two soldiers were killed by a landmine in southern Bolivar, a Jungla (Colombian National Police airmobile commando) was killed by a landmine in northern Antioquia, and a soldier was killed by hostile fire in Caqueta. There were two reported attacks on manual eradication camps, leading to several injuries. Manual eradication groups in Caqueta and Narino are reporting frequent hostile fire incidents. Through August, 32 people (24 security personnel and seven civilians, including one UN Topographer) have died during this year's manual eradication operations. In all of 2008, 26 security personnel and civilian eradicators were killed in manual eradication operations.

¶6. (SBU) Separate from the GME program, the Colombian Army (COLAR) and the Colombian National Police (CNP) conduct manual eradication as part of their normal operations. Through August, COLAR had eradicated 3,488 hectares of coca, 44 hectares of poppy and two hectares of marijuana, the CNP has eradicated 1,134 hectares of coca, eight hectares of poppy and 46 hectares of marijuana and the Navy 164 hectares of coca.

PLAN COLOMBIA HELICOPTER PROGRAM (PCHP)

¶7. (SBU) PCHP aircraft operated from Tumaco, Larandia, San Jose del Guaviare, and Tolemaida bases and flew a total of 800 hours providing air assaults, air movements, reconnaissance, medical evacuations, and support missions for the CD Brigade and other vetted COLAR units. PCHP aircraft provided crash-site airlift support for an impacted AT-802. Tumaco-based PCHP helicopters provided support for three CNP manual eradication operations. PCHP helicopters supported one Chief of Mission HVT Joint Task Force operation and flew 74.6 hours supporting 16 medical evacuation flights that transported 21 patients.

COLOMBIA NATIONAL POLICE (CNP)
AIR SERVICE (ARAVI) SUPPORT

¶8. (SBU) ARAVI's NAS-supported fleet flew 2,256 mission hours in August. The seven UH-60 Black Hawks closed out the month with 272 flight hours and an Operational Readiness (OR) rate of 86 percent. Two UH-60s are undergoing depot maintenance for structural repairs. The Bell 212 fleet flew 295 mission hours with an OR rate of 61 percent. One Bell 212 still needs to be inducted into the Service Life Extension Program/Rewire. The Huey II OR rate was 69 percent while flying 1,036 hours. Two Huey II aircraft, or six percent of the fleet, are currently undergoing depot maintenance for structural repairs. The DC-3 fleet flew 375 hours in August, with an OR rate of 64 percent; one DC-3 is undergoing a 2,000-hour inspection. The last C-26 Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Aerial

Platform (ISRAP) PNC 0224 is expected to be delivered in September 2009. The C-208 Caravan, with a mapping camera installed, is operational and the Colombians have received the required training to operate it.

INTERDICTION

¶9. (SBU) According to the year-to-date statistics, the Colombian National Police (CNP) has destroyed 1,114 base and 131 HCl laboratories and six airstrips; captured 339 weapons, 316 land vehicles, 243 riverine and 10 open water craft and 158 single-engine and 26 twin-engine aircraft.

¶10. (SBU) While supporting manual eradication in Tumaco, on August 3, the Tuluá Junglas destroyed an HCl laboratory in Rio Mira (Narino) and seized 1.5 metric tons of HCl cocaine. This same company also destroyed two HCl laboratories (with 800 kgs of HCl cocaine) and 12 base laboratories in Guapi, Narino, and Jamundi, Cauca. Near Buenaventura (Pacific coast), the Tuluá Junglas destroyed a semi-submersible watercraft-building facility.

¶11. (SBU) In San Jose del Guaviare and Mariquita, Tolima, the Bogota-based Junglas seized more than 200 kgs of base cocaine, 7,000 kgs of macerated coca leaves, 1,200 kgs of dried coca leaves, multiple coca seed beds, various weapons, 4,000-plus gallons of liquid precursors, and an estimated 1,400 kgs of solid precursors.

¶12. (SBU) The Santa Marta-based Junglas continued supporting the Search Block force in Monteria, Cordoba that has been looking for the remnants of the Don Mario (Daniel Rendsn) narcotrafficking group.

¶13. (SBU) On August 24, in Choco, a contingent of Junglas, COPES (Police Special Forces), GRATE (CNP search and rescue), Navy Intelligence, and COLAF (Colombian Air Force) armed helicopters with ARAVI support launched an attack on a remote "Rastrojos" emerging criminal group camp that led to the arrest of 37 members of the criminal group, the capture of various weapons (23 rifles and one machine gun), and mortar rounds. Commanding officer, TC Ruiz (DIRAN Operations Officer) stated DIRAN's intention to participate in many more such joint missions - especially on the Pacific Coast.

¶14. (SBU) The Jungla Commando International Course (54 International students and 29 Colombian National Police students) began on August 2 and continues on schedule at the newly inaugurated Pijao facility. To date, four of the eleven Dominican Republic students have been unable to continue their training and have returned to their country. The Combat Medic Course, which began with 45 students, now has a total of 39 students. A four-week U.S. Army Special Forces "Small Units" course that focuses on rural reconnaissance began on August 31 and includes 36 Junglas from various companies.

BASE SECURITY/ROAD INTERDICTION
/NVD PROGRAM

¶15. (SBU) The Base Security course that ran from July 21 to September 2 in Tumaco graduated 44 students from various DIRAN, EMCAR (Mobile Carabinero Squadron), COLNAV (Marine Corps) and BRACNA (Antinarcotics Brigade) units. The next course will be conducted during DIRAN Northwest Zone's base construction and will take place in mid-September in Necocli, Gulf of Uraba (near the Panamanian border).

¶16. (SBU) The IDIQ La Julia project to reinforce the police base attacked in May was completed. Phase II of the Miraflores project is scheduled to be completed in late September or early October. FARC harassment has impeded progress of the Tierradentro, Antioquia project, which is now slated to be completed in September. The Piedras Blancas and Belen de Bajira contracts were completed in August.

¶17. (SBU) 150 of the 165 new Night Vision Devices (NVDs) were

inspected in August and have been sent to the designated EMCAR units located throughout the country.

PORT SECURITY PROGRAM (PSP)

¶18. (SBU) In August, DIRAN's Ports and Airports Area (ARPAE) unit seized 313.5 kgs of cocaine and 0.5 kgs of heroin at Bogota's El Dorado airport and arrested 17 people. ARPAE seized one kg of cocaine at Pereira airport; in Cali's airport, 13.5 kgs of cocaine, 7.8 kgs of heroin, and 8.3 kgs of marijuana were seized and four people arrested. At the Medellin airport, the ARPAE seized 4.5 kgs and arrested two people; at the Cartagena airport - 4.2 kgs of cocaine were seized and two people arrested. The majority of the passengers arrested were Colombian, followed by Spaniards - most of whom were traveling to Spain.

¶19. (SBU) The ARPAE seized 240 kgs of cocaine and arrested 12 people at the Buenaventura port; seized 278 kgs of cocaine at the Cartagena port; 32.3 kgs of cocaine at the Barranquilla port; and 3.8 kgs of marijuana at the San Andres port.

¶20. (SBU) The DIRAN polygraph unit conducted polygraph exams on 38 members of the ARPAE unit as well as on the CNP's anti-kidnapping unit. Of those tested, 20 passed the exam, 17 failed, and one had inconclusive results. A special DIRAN Judicial Police group for the Pacific coast that receives support from NAS/DEA ran an investigation leading to the arrest of 12 workers from different port operators and security companies in the Buenaventura port.

COLOMBIAN ARMY COUNTERDRUG (CD) BRIGADE

¶21. (SBU) The CD Brigade's First, Second, and Third Battalions supported eradication and conducted interdiction and combat operations from bases in Tumaco, San Jose del Guaviare and Larandia. The battalions conducted interdiction and combat operations against the FARC's Daniel Aldana Mobil Column, various FARC fronts, and the ELN's Guerrero Del Sindagua Company in Narino, Cauca, Meta, Guaviare, and Caqueta departments. The CD Brigade secured a total of 6,072 ha for aerial eradication and destroyed two HCl and 16 coca base laboratories, two enemy caches, and one clandestine refinery, seizing 10 kgs of coca base, 850 gallons of liquid cocaine, 6,646 gallons of liquid precursors, 2,020 gallons of solid precursors, 4,620 kgs of processed coca leaf, 1,252,300 coca seedlings, one boat, eight microwaves, two generators, two refrigerators, seven heaters, six gas cylinders, and five special devices used to process cocaine. During combat operations, the battalion confiscated two shotguns, 12 rifles, 2,112 rounds of ammunition, and three 2-meter radios used for communications. The battalions killed two and captured four FARC terrorists during operations.

REESTABLISH POLICE PRESENCE PROGRAM (CARABINEROS)

¶22. (SBU) The Carabинero squadrons throughout the country captured 157 personnel (7 FARC/ELN members, 5 from criminal bands, 12 narcotraffickers, and 133 common criminals) and seized 60 weapons, 4,284 gallons of liquid precursors, 8,041 kgs of solid precursors, and 10,535 gallons of diesel fuel. The EMCAR also deactivated nine improvised explosive devices and eradicated 123 hectares of coca. The school at Pijao graduated more than 300 students from basic and designated marksmanship courses.

¶23. (SBU) In Tuluа, the 51st Carabinero squadron helped to capture criminal band "Los Rastrojos" number three in charge Edgar Anibal Escobar Rojas. In Uraba, the 10th squadron captured Victor Alfonso Rojas, wanted for aggravated homicide, attempted homicide and terrorism. Squadron 41 captured four extortionists in Cauca. Squadron 40 captured criminal band leader Aurelio Palaga while supporting the regional judicial police (SIJIN) in Caloto, Cauca. In San Lorenzo, Santander, Squadron 18 captured three ELN members wanted for the 2002 murder of two policemen. Squadron 42 found and destroyed various explosive devices in San Vicente de Caguan,

Caqueta while conducting operations in support of a presidential visit to the area.

AIR BRIDGE DENIAL (ABD)

¶24. (SBU) ABD aircraft, participating in a mission with the Joint Interagency Task Force South and the Colombian Navy, impounded two vessels - one in the Caribbean and one in the Pacific. One of the vessels carried over four million dollars in cash and the other vessel was not registered and carried 58 55-gallon drums filled with fuel; all eight crewmembers were arrested for smuggling contraband. The ABD SR-26 flew 50 hours in 22 missions and the SR-560 aircraft flew 242 hours in 100 missions.

ENVIRONMENTAL

¶25. (SBU) In August, the interagency complaints committee received 1,834 new claims of alleged spray damage to legal crops; 1,829 of these cases originated from Barbacoas, Narino. DIRAN reviewed the complaints, most of which arrived incomplete, and determined that several members from the same family filed complaints for the same plot of land. NAS will not be able to verify this information until site coordinates are received.

¶26. (SBU) A total of 1,357 cases will be closed because the complainants failed to submit the complaint within 20 days of the alleged spray incident; in 472 cases, the complainants need to provide additional information. In August, 103 crop damage cases were closed due to incomplete applications, 26 were closed because either coca was mixed with legal crops or no damage was found; seven cases were compensated totaling \$50,556.

¶27. (SBU) The environmental team continues to focus on reducing the complaints backlog. During the first week of August, the complaints committee visited 38 sites in Arauca and will compensate 31 complaints. Since the cases date back to 2005, it has been difficult to determine if legal crops had indeed been damaged. The committee then traveled to Putumayo and Narino where they visited 48 sites; several complaints there dated from 2007-2008. The complaints committee determined that 15 farmers would be compensated. The NAS lawyer is working on an agreement with the DIRAN to set specific guidelines to handle crop-damage complaints.

¶28. (SBU) During a two-week period in August, DIRAN received almost 4,000 spray complaints from three veredas (townships) in the Tumaco municipality. The CNP found the majority of the complaints to be invalid due to multiple submissions, complaints from multiple family members, extended delays in submission, or the presence of coca in the field sprayed. It appears that the flood of new complaints is a concerted effort to impede spray operations in Narino.

DRUG DEMAND PREVENTION (DDP)

¶29. (SBU) INL awarded a \$49,438 NAS Bogota grant to the CICAD/OAS Nursing School Project using the new Public International Organization (PIO) grant process. Using the new process caused a delay of about four months in awarding the grant.

INDIVIDUAL DEMOBILIZATION PROGRAM

¶30. (SBU) In August, 265 people certified under the Ministry of Defense (MOD) Humanitarian Program for Demobilized Individuals (PAHD), among them 60 imprisoned former insurgents and 24 indigenous people. So far this year, 1,922 have demobilized, for a total of 19,839 since 2002. Eighty percent of the demobilized are former FARC members and the rest are ELN.

¶31. (SBU) The PAHD, Ministry of Interior and Justice, and the Bureau of Prisons agreed to begin showing a NAS prisons program-funded video explaining Decree 1059 to FARC and ELN inmates

interested in demobilizing from prison. In addition to the video, the audio will be played on prison radio stations to increase exposure.

¶132. (SBU) Program officials led a Colombian interagency demobilization event in support of Naza indigenous communities near Santander de Quilichao, Cauca. A total of 24 individuals who were members of the FARC 6th Front and Jacobo Arenas Mobile Column demobilized before hundreds of members of their communities and the group of government representatives. Another similar event and dialogue with indigenous leaders on August 26 in Antioquia did not have comparable results - 35 individuals, former FARC 34th Front members, demobilized before their indigenous communities in a traditional ceremony, but during the event the community leaders reversed their position, refusing to recognize legitimacy of the state. Consequently, these indigenous former Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) members did not legally demobilize. PAHD officials will continue to lobby indigenous leaders to encourage cooperation with government efforts.

¶133. (SBU) Desire for a new start, abuse by former comrades, political divergence, and military pressure continue to be the main motivations for desertion in 2009. Information voluntarily provided by the demobilized is one of the best sources of intelligence available to security forces. Reintegration remains a major challenge for the Colombian government as almost 80% of demobilized individuals have not completed elementary school. The Ministry of Defense continues to strengthen initiatives to provide psychological assistance to the demobilized and prevent illegal recruitment.

ADMINISTRATION

¶135. (SBU) NAS cleared approximately \$7 million of unliquidated obligations during August. NAS received and obligated \$52.6 million of FY 2007 Andean Counterdrug Program funding that was on hold by the Congress because of human rights concerns with the Colombian military. This funding will be used for COLAR aviation to support its nationalization efforts. Approximately \$19 million of FY 2008 assistance funds remain on hold.

NICHOLS